COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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" It was, say you, to purchase '*security* for the future,' at *home*, that you surrendered so many of our " possessions abroad. It was, say your advocates (for there are such men, my lord), *to keep the French* " *from the mother country*, that you offered the colonies as a prey to their rapacity; but, my lord, did " you never read, in the fable, that the wolf, after having swallowed the kids, finished his repast " upon the dam?—In short, my lord, your treaty has conjured up the spectre of *invasion*, that horri- " ble spectre, *which will now haunt us, night and day, to the hour of our dissolution.*"—COBBETT'S LETTERS " ON THE PEACE, p. 87 and 94.—*Written in Oct.* 1801.



## DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY.

This being the topic which now engages the attention of all those, who have sense enough to perceive the danger to which their country is exposed, and who have, at the same time, a wish to preserve it, and courage to endeavour to accomplish that wish, we think it our duty to devote a considerable part of the present sheet to the speech delivered, on the subject, by MR. WINDHAM, whose counsel, if it had been followed before, would have prevented the evils with which we are now beset; and, if followed now, may yet prevent those evils from terminating in our subjugation.——The Speech which we are about to insert, was delivered in the House of Commons, on the 20th instant, in disapprobation of the plan, proposed by the ministers, for raising 50,000 men, in England, Scotland, and Ireland, by way of ballot, or military conscription. The plan, as described by the Secretary at War, was as follows. A body of 50,000 men, to be called *the Army of Reserve*, to be immediately raised by ballot, according to the following quotas: the counties of England and Wales, 31,000, London and the Tower Hamlets, 3,000, Scotland, 6,000, Ireland, 10,000. Whether the conscripts were to be allowed to find *substitutes*, or were, in case of not serving themselves, to pay a fine to the government, does not appear to have been determined on. The term of service was *four years*, with an extension, as to place, to any part of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Islands of Jersey and Guernsey.—The officers, to be commissioned by the King, were to come from the half-pay list of the army, from amongst those *who had quitted the service for want of promotion*, from the Marines, from the East India Company's service, and, if all these sources were insufficient, as if this multifarious and motley groupe were not enough so, the remaining vacancies were proposed to be filled up by persons who served as officers in Volunteer Yeomanry Corps in Ireland, during the late rebellion, to which were to be added, if necessary, the officers of the Recruiting Staff, at the head of whom is GENERAL GRAEME, a person that the Secretary at War described as being " himself a " *host*," a circumstance at which, we trust, the nation must have heard with the most lively joy.—Such were the out-lines of the plan, to which Mr. Windham made the objections that will be found in his speech. It will be perceived, too, that he did not object to this plan without proposing another instead of it; and, it only remains for the public and the Parliament to determine, *which is the best.*

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SIR,—The Honourable Gentleman has introduced this measure in a manner perfectly suitable to the solemnity of the occasion, and to the impression which such an occasion was likely to produce on his mind. I wish the measure itself had been equally suitable to the manner of its introduction, or to the circumstances out of which it has arisen. But, alas! it has fallen miserably short both of the occasion and of the expectation which I had allowed myself to form of it. Instead of helping us out of our difficulties it serves only to confirm a most material part of them, and for the rest, to give us but very imperfect and inadequate assistance. This grand measure of which so much expectation has been raised, turns out, at last, to be nothing more than a mere addition to the militia, with all the evils incident to that system, perverted and misapplied as it has been for a period of several years past. In addition to 70,000 men raised or raising according to that system upon the population of Great-Britain, and of 18,000 so raised in Ireland, we are now to have 10,000 more for Ireland and 40,000 for Great Britain, making in the whole the number of 138,000, of which 18,000 (the original militia in Ireland), are to be raised by bounty in the first instance, and the rest to be raised by ballot, with the privilege of exemption from personal service, on the condition of finding a substitute. Does any man dream after this, that it is possible for Great Britain to have an army? The hope is utterly childish. The recruiting of the British army has, as every body knows, long stood still. An army not recruited must, by degrees, waste away. In spite of all the hopes, which some may indulge of transferring men hereafter by new bounties from

the force thus raised to the regular army,—a most uncertain and ineligible method,—the army must unavoidably stand still for the present, and one may venture to say, under the influence of such a system is not likely to be again put in motion.

This, therefore, is my great, leading, and fundamental objection to this measure, that it destroys all hope, now and hereafter, of a force truly regular,—that it completely cuts up the army. This it effects, not so much by the raising of so many men,—a measure which at the present moment I am not prepared to object to; but, by admitting the principle of substitution. That a compulsory levy cannot be made without a power of commutation of some sort or other, I am ready to allow. The grievance would be utterly intolerable. But I hoped, as the hon. gent. knows, that another mode might have been adopted, namely, that of commutation of service for a fixed fine; which fine should be paid not into the hands of the corps for the purpose of being laid out in providing a substitute, with all the effect which such an additional demand must have in raising the rate of the bounty, but should be paid to government, to be employed by them in any way they should think proper, or, if you choose to give it an appropriation, for the providing a recruit for the *army*. The great point is to abolish the present competition, under which it is impossible that the army can stand; and with this view, my meaning would certainly be, not merely to abolish this competition so far as it would arise from the body now proposed to be raised, but universally for the whole of the militia, old or new. There should be no recruiting but for the army. The militia, and every force raised by ballot should consist of nothing but the balloted men, so far as they would go. To insure the service of them, as far as I could, or as far as they were of a description to make their service desirable, I would impose a fine, greater or less, as might ultimately be thought right; but I would sooner leave the service incomplete, than, in order to complete it, introduce that fatal principle of substitution; wrong in a constitutional view if that were now worth attending to, but far more wrong and perfectly fatal from the effect which it must have of destroying all possibility of recruiting the army.

That it is the Militia system, extended as it has been of late years, and changed, as it is, in its nature and character, that has eat out the army, nobody can reasonably doubt. What is there in the condition of this country that should make it incapable of having an army in some degree, at least, proportionate to its population? or prevent its having now what it has had in all former times? That the Militia system, as carried on of late would and must prevent this, is perfectly obvious. I want to know what ground there is for concluding that there are any other causes, if these were removed, which must equally produce the same effect? When we say, therefore, that we can get no men for the army, the answer is that we have never fairly tried. Let the experiment be *bona fide* made. Abolish the competition: and in order to meet the effects of the change thus produced, begin now, what the H. G. says must be begun some time or other, and put your army on that new footing, which, without being necessary for its improvement; for I know not what improvement it wants; may be necessary to maintain its numbers. The first of these measures, as it has always appeared to me, is to change the condition of service from life to term of years;—a measure on which, if I cannot say, that military men are unanimous, I may safely say, that they are nearly so, and to which I certainly have never heard any objection that could at all be set in competition with the advantages to be expected from it. Its advantages indeed, if they really exist, are of that sort which must take place of every other consideration. The first merit of a book, says a great critick, is to make itself read. The first merit in the constitution of an army is to provide that it should continue an army.—Let the army, therefore, at this moment, and not at any time of future peace, and with a view to wars that may then be future, be put upon that footing, in which, in conjunction with other changes, it may hope to be recruited as it has heretofore been, and may release us from this dreadful and unheard-of state of being engaged in a war, without an offensive and disposeable force. With all the disadvantage which the very memory of the bounties heretofore given, will not fail to produce even when the bounties themselves, to this inordinate amount, shall be given no longer, I should not despair of seeing our army gradually restored, and the service again go on, as it did in all former times.

It is in conformity to these views that my judgment must be regulated upon the present measure. As a levy of so many men on the principle of ballot I may submit to it, government declaring it to be necessary, because the urgency of the case seems to leave me no option, and hardly time to consider the question. But as a ballot including the further principles of substitution, I must

formally protest against it: because it tends to produce effects, which no consideration of present advantage could, perhaps, justify the incurring: but which, likewise, in my opinion, render the measure perfectly ill-calculated to meet even the present danger. I may accept the ballot for the sake of the immediate force which it will produce, however disadvantageous I may think it in various other respects: but I must at least endeavour to disarm it of its chief mischief, by recommending that the terms of exemption from service should be a fixed fine, as I would, for the same reason, extend that principle to every other part of the Militia.

But here I must make my formal complaint of the government, which by its neglect, its delays, its total want of all foresight and precaution, has brought us to a state in which no pressure that is presented to us, can be fairly judged of. We are in straits in which we have no room to turn ourselves. The danger presses upon us so immediately, that we have not time to consider what is best: we must take up with what is first presented to us. Why has this measure been delayed to the present time? Why has it only now been discovered that a force of the sort now proposed would finally become necessary, and why, if such necessity was foreseen, has the time and manner of raising it only now been submitted to this House? Above all, why was the country reduced to its present defenceless state, immediately upon the signature of the Treaty of Amiens, in spite of what must have been obvious, one should have thought, to every common observer, of what the ministers now tell us, they themselves saw; namely, that the peace which they had made was no peace: but was open, at every moment, to such a rupture as that which has now happened. In this state did they think it right to dismantle our fleets, to reduce considerably our army, to discharge troops, which, in six weeks after, they wished to have back, or which if they did not wish to have back, as the H. G's gestures would seem to indicate, it is only a new proof how little they understood the real nature of their situation. All this was done for the miserable purpose of deluding the people with a false idea of the blessings, as they were called, of peace, and of the money they were to save by thus parting with all the means of safety.

Leaving these reflexions for the present, though I trust never forgetting them, let us return to the consideration of the measure immediately before us: and this, perhaps, we cannot properly judge of without taking into our view the larger principles on which measures of this sort must depend. We are in a new and unprecedented state of things, in which new dangers exist, and new modes of resistance must be resorted to if we would hope not to be overcome by them. If we proceed in the old beaten course, if we think that what saved us heretofore must be sufficient to save us now, our destruction is inevitable.

The great desideratum which we have to make good, the great problem which we have to propose to ourselves, is to find the means by which that natural force, which, in this as in all similar instances, is on the side of those attacked, may be so applied as to overcome the superior advantages of another kind which may be found on the side of the enemy.—If the enemy could bring with him an army not more considerable than that which we should have to oppose him, great as the object is at stake, much as I should advise that even in that case no precautions should be omitted, yet such is my confidence in the excellence of British troops, such are the proofs which they have given of their capacity to contend with and to overcome upon any thing like equal terms the troops with whom they would have to deal, that even without those subsidiary aids, which yet it would not be right to neglect, I should feel perfectly at ease about the event.

But we are to calculate upon the supposition, a supposition far from inconsistent with the probability of the fact, that the enemy may be able to land an army in this country greater either than the whole of our regular force, or at least than that part of it which could immediately be collected to oppose them. The question then is, how shall this deficiency be supplied?—And here we have, as the foundation of our hopes, this leading fact, that in the case of every invaded country, but certainly of every invaded island, the physical force is always on the side of the invaded.—No country probably, was ever invaded by a force superior in number, to the portion of the inhabitants of that country capable of bearing arms. It certainly will not happen to us to be so. Were the enemy to find the means of putting on shore in different parts, a body of a hundred thousand men, a supposition not likely, but by no means to be rejected as impossible, the population of this very town would yield a force that ought to make no difficulty of contending with them.—There is no question therefore of the sufficiency of physical force: but, though we are abundantly satisfied of this truth, to a degree indeed that leads us often into a childish and boastful confidence, let us not overlook another truth, not less important and certain, that in the conduct of human affairs it is

rarely the physical force which determines the event. If it did so, no country, as appears by what is just said, would ever fall a prey to invasion. Hanover would at this time be an independent country. It was not for want of inhabitants capable of bearing arms that that country yielded up without a blow, its laws, its government, its liberties, its property, to the handful of men, comparatively speaking, who marched against it under General Mortier. It is thus, in other instances. A battle is fought, a fortress is taken, and the country submits. If we have a mind to pursue this truth, in cases of a different sort,—by what means do all the governments of the earth subsist? By possessing the physical force? Quite the contrary; the physical force is always on the side of the governed. The government of every country, with all their establishments of senates and magistrates, and ministers and officers, and even with the armies which it may have at its disposal, is nothing, in point of numbers, compared with the inhabitants at large: yet thus weak in physical force, these governments are able, fortunately for the peace and happiness of the world, to hold in subjection those inhabitants, and that not only in countries where the general sentiment may be supposed to go with the government, and the submission of consequence to be voluntary, as in these happy realms, but in countries such as that of France at this moment, where of 50 or 60 millions or more, whom Buonaparté may have at his disposal, there are not probably so many thousands who really wish him well or submit to his government on any other principle than that of fear. This truth, therefore, the jacobinism of modern times chose as the foundation of all its operations, the scope and object of which was to apply the physical force of every country to the subversion of its government.

We are in circumstances, when we must prosecute a similar inquiry for a very opposite purpose; and must endeavour to find out how the physical means of a great country may be employed, not for the overthrow of its government, but to save itself from the incursion of foreign armies. And we may venture to say, that if these means can be gradually discovered and brought into use, the discovery will form an epoch in human affairs hardly less important, and certainly much more satisfactory, than that which was produced by the discovery above alluded to, of the art of overthrowing governments.

We are now in the state of being compelled to try what can be done towards effecting this great *desideratum*; in which if we cannot succeed better than has been done in most of the countries in Europe, in Hanover, in Holland, in Flanders, in Italy, in Switzerland, the fate of this country will hang on nothing but chance. We must form our judgment of the present measure by its tendency to carry those endeavours into effect.—The general course of the proceeding, in the minds of his Majesty's ministers, seems to have been this—A regular force, a force consisting of troops of the line is confessedly the best; but circumstances, and above all the urgency of the case, will not allow of this being obtained in time. Not being able therefore to obtain the best, you must do what the law directs in the case of evidence, you must get the next best. This next best is a Militia, or a force raised upon the principles now proposed. There will therefore be three species of force in the country, 1st. the Regulars, 2dly, the Militia, and 3dly, the Volunteers, and other corps of that description; and these being to be taken, in point of preference, in the order in which they are here enumerated, the Regulars being to be considered as better than the Militia, and the Militia than the Volunteers,—the masculine more worthy than the feminine, and the feminine than the neuter,—You must do in this, as all persons must do in similar circumstances, you must take the second when you cannot get the first, and the third when you cannot get either of the other two.

All this, so stated, is perfectly true. I am willing to admit, not only that the Regulars are better than the Militia, which no intelligent Militia officer will feel at all disposed to deny; but that Militia, on equal numbers, are better than any other species of force of an establishment still less regular.—But in the application of this to the support of the present measure there is a complete fallacy: for it is not what the option would be between these descriptions of force supposing them all before us, or, putting one out of the question, what would be the choice between the remaining two; but whether you will begin by raising that which you do not consider as best, and thereby produce a state of things in which to obtain the best shall be no longer practicable. From the language held about the comparative value of these objects you would suppose a course to be held the very reverse of that actually pursued; you would suppose the higher bounty given for the best force: and that it was only when hopes on that side were nearly exhausted, that you laid out your endeavours on a force confessedly less eligible.

But just the contrary. You give your fifteen guineas for service in the Militia; and ten or five for service in the army: and then you exclaim, that you are obliged to have recourse to Militia, because you can get no army.—This statement, therefore, when applied thus generally, can by no means be admitted. All that can be said is, that in the mode proposed, and by a continuance of the Militia system, you will, for a time, raise your men faster, and will, in the same time, produce a greater force. The question will then be, how far the superior quantity will compensate the difference of quality; and how far present advantages must be made to outweigh, in the actual circumstances, all consideration of objects, even of the highest consequence, in future.

In this view it may be necessary to say a word or two, on the difference that must, for ever, subsist between troops of the line, and every other species of troops serving upon the footing of a Militia. It is as little pleasant to me as to any other gentleman to be making comparisons, that can rarely be satisfactory to both parties, and to be marking perpetually to officers of the Militia, that, after all their zeal, all their intelligence, all their honourable sacrifices, all their meritorious exertions, and with all the well-founded vanity which they may feel at the success of their endeavours; a success far exceeding all that the founders of the Militia could ever have ventured to promise themselves; the service in which they have thus laboured, cannot, by the very nature of it, ever attain to all the qualities which belong to regular troops. It is no reproach to them that this should be so; because it is no reproach to any one that he cannot alter the nature of things; at the same time I do not say that the reflection may not be in some small degree painful: it may be painful to those who have done so much, to think that it should not be possible for them to do every thing; that they must find in the nature of the subject those limits which they do not find in their own zeal or talents.—The difference between the two services, is founded on the eternal difference that must subsist between troops, who always remain at home, and those who are placed from time to time in distant stations; between troops who have seen service, and those who, generally speaking, have not; between troops commanded by officers, who have never acted with them in difficulties and dangers, who have never shown, because they have had no opportunity of showing, their title to command by the valour which they have displayed, who can pretend to no experience, who can bring no authority from former reputation;—and troops, whose officers possess in themselves all these sources of ascendency, and all these claims to respect. There is, moreover, a sort of soldier character, arising from a thousand causes, and acquired insensibly in the course of regular service, which will easily be distinguished by discerning eyes, and will furnish in general a marked discrimination between the Militia soldier, and the soldier of the line. These circumstances must of course enter into account when we are regulating our choice between the two services, and founding our measures on the mixed consideration of numbers in each, compared with their respective qualities.—However confident I may feel that our Militia force will prove a most valuable part, should the enemy come, of the national defence, however certain I am that in the day of action Militia regiments will be found who will have distinguished themselves not less than the choicest troops we have, I can never say generally that a force of that description is to be put upon a level with that of the regular army.

I have been surprised, therefore, to hear it urged, that while a certain number of men must be kept at home for the defence of the country, it was a matter of indifference whether our army to that amount was composed of Militia or Regulars. I thought I had heard upon other occasions high hopes expressed of the security which the country must derive from the return of those veteran legions, who had so crowned themselves with glory, and established the military fame of the country, in Egypt and other places. But according to this idea, they could do no more for us than any other equal number of troops, who had never seen an enemy. But is even this the only difference between Regulars and Militia, between a disposeable and undisposeable force? Though the circumstances of the war may, at one time, require a force of a certain amount to be kept within the kingdom, the next moment may set a great part of it at liberty; and is it of no consequence that its constitution should be such as to make it incapable of availing itself of that liberty? Nay, if even that should be so, and that in point of fact the power of sending it abroad was one of which no use could be made, is it indifferent whether the enemy is apprized or not of that truth, and whether he is enabled to calculate his plans upon the previous knowledge, that the force existing in the country can, in no case, be sent against him? If the evils with which we have to struggle, if the dangers which threaten us are ever to end, it must be by some change, from with-

in or from without, which shall be made in that power which has sworn our destruction, and which, till she is destroyed herself, will never cease in her endeavours to accomplish it. And what must be the counsels, and what the situation of this country, if we are voluntarily to place ourselves in a situation, in which it shall be impossible for us to co-operate to the producing any such change, or the availing ourselves of it, if it should happen by other means? If such is our situation, or such are our ideas, there is no difficulty in predicting that we must ultimately perish.

In every view, therefore, either of what is to be looked to hereafter, or is necessary in the present moment, I must condemn a measure, of which both the immediate effect, and final tendency, is to deprive the country of a regular army, that is to say, of the best means for home defence, and of the only means of effectual and finally successful war.—And here it may not be amiss to advert to another measure of less extent, but of the same general character, and which as far as it goes, is a revival of that system unhappily adopted in the beginning of the last war, and of the effects of which the army has not yet recovered; namely, that of raising men for rank. Notwithstanding all the modifications and temperaments introduced into it by the Honourable Gentleman, the effects of it, as far as the measure extends, will be much the same as in the former instance. No prohibitions will ever restrain officers placed in those circumstances, from giving more than the regulated bounty. In fact, it is notorious that they do give more, the effect of the measure therefore, in this respect, is only to add to the competition against the army already subsisting, and to raise the rate of bounty against the other recruiting parties; against the ordinary recruiting, you may say, of the same regiment. So that it can hardly be considered as adding a man to the army.—On the other hand, if money is not to be employed in raising these men, money I mean beyond the rate of bounty allowed by the regulation, then what are you to rely upon?—Upon a hope ten times more fatal in the accomplishment of it, in my opinion, than any effect likely to result from the increase of the rate of bounty; namely, that a certain number of British officers forgetting that delicacy of sentiment, and nice sense of honour, which so peculiarly marks the character of officers in our service, and makes them what they are, will become, what is called, able recruiters, that is to say, men versed and expert in the noble art of crimping, one of the most degrading employments, and most inconsistent with all upright and liberal feelings, that can well be conceived.

Such is the state of the measures offered to us at last by his Majesty's government, in this most awful crisis of our affairs, with a view of averting the dreadful dangers with which we have to struggle. I have stated already the changes which I should wish to see introduced into these measures, and the course which I would pursue with respect to those parts of general defence of which we have here been treating. If a body of men must be raised by ballot, of which I do not care to give a decisive opinion, let the numbers be confined to the mere men balloted, and let the sums paid as penalties for exemption be laid out not for completing these corps, but for augmenting the recruiting fund for the service of the army.—Let the same be done for the Militia universally. If government have a mind to procure substitutes, in any instance, for the old Militia, let it take the providing these substitutes into its own hands, so as to see that no increase be thence made to what it should fix for the rate of bounty.—Let the condition of service in the army be changed so as to make the engagement for term of years instead of for life, with such increasing advantages held out, at the close of succeeding periods, (as well by certain privileges to be then enjoyed, as by bounties, and increase of pension,) as might be most likely to ensure a continuance of the service of the men once engaged.—To these changes should be added a total abolition of drafting, not silently introduced, and adopted merely in practice, but so declared before-hand, as that its benefits might be felt in the recruiting. In general, in this as in many other regulations that might be proposed, the maintaining, or rather the creating, an army would be my object, conceiving that even for purposes of mere defence, a small portion of truly regular troops, in conjunction with the undisciplined efforts of the country, may be set in balance against a very large proportion of troops imperfectly formed.

Thus far I have been considering only what may be called the embodied force of the country. But will this force, increase it, constitute it, how you will, be sufficient? And must not a new and larger fund be resorted to, namely, that which will embrace all the strength, energy, zeal, talents, faculties mental and corporeal, of the country? If we think that we can be protected by any of the ordinary means of war, by trusting our defence to men, dressed as soldiers, and hired or compelled to defend us, bating the chances, by sea or otherwise,

that may interpose to defeat the enemy's projects in the first instance, we are little less than undone. This embodied force, be it good or bad, can go but a very little way. You cannot have it, if you wait to the last moment; to call it forth beforehand, to the necessary amount, would be an evil which the state of society in this country could never endure. This evil will be felt to a fearful extent in the present measure; without, at the same time, any adequate advantage being derived from it. The whole, indeed, of this measure is of that sort of which the examples are so numerous, and which are calculated more for show than use. We hear often of parliamentary grounds, and in cases where parliamentary grounds would seem to be something distinct from grounds of reason and common sense. In the same manner we meet occasionally with what may be called parliamentary measures: that is to say, measures which in skilful hands will make an imposing figure in a statement, particularly when addressed to persons wholly unconversant with the subject; but will never pass upon experienced and intelligent men, and will be found utterly to fail in practice: a sort of show-goods, such as will appear to sufficient advantage in a shop window, but will never bear the eye of a dealer, and will be found wholly unfit for wear. At all events, you must have recourse to other, and more extensive means. You must prepare the country: you must put the country in a situation in which its patriotic zeal, its native courage, its various and abundant energies may have a way to operate and produce their natural effects.

The general plan, which presents itself to me for that purpose, and on which a thousand others might be engrafted, according as circumstances varied, or future views developed themselves, would be instantly to distribute the country, or such parts of it as you wished immediately to prepare (for one merit, at least, of this plan is, that you may take as much or as little of it as you please) into small divisions of two or three contiguous parishes each, according to the population, stationing an officer in each, with a small deposit of arms and ammunition, and whose office it should be, in concert with all the zeal, intelligence, and influence which he might find in the neighbourhood, to train those who should voluntarily offer themselves, to such parts of military training as they would be alone capable of, and as are, after all, by far the most important. It would never enter into my idea, to introduce into bands of this sort any of the foppery of dress, or any distinctive dress at all; a ribband, or even a handkerchief round the arm, to distinguish those, who were receiving this instruction, from the crowd that might occasionally accompany them, is all that would be necessary. Those essential parts of military training, as they seem to be thought, a fife and a drum, the marching in rank and in file, the wheeling backwards, the eyes right and eyes left, whatever may be their value on other occasions,—a point that I do not presume to meddle with—must here, however reluctantly, be given up. Firing at a mark; learning, indeed, to fire at all, which, (thanks to the game laws) few of our peasantry are acquainted with; some instruction in the manner of cleaning arms; much instruction in the methods of lining hedges, firing from behind trees, retiring upon call, and resuming a new station; these are all the heads of discipline to which I should propose them to be exercised.

It is not, indeed, very well ascertained what proportion these may bear (a very deficient one, no doubt,) to the whole of what is required of soldiers; nor how far much of that which use and prejudice has taught us to consider as essential, might be dispensed with, though possibly not without some disadvantage, even in regular armies. It is not very clear, that troops in the Duke of Marlborough's time, were required in marching to move all of them the same leg at once. Much of the modern practice was introduced under the authority of the great King of Prussia, who adapted his system to his own mode of warfare,—the warfare of large armies in open countries,—and might himself possibly be aware, that many of its rules, though upon the whole desirable, were not of that importance which his less-informed imitators have since ascribed to them. The French, whose authority at this time it is not for Europe to dispute, have changed back much of what was then introduced, and have got nearer in some respects to what was the old practice, but more nearly perhaps to what was the practice in the late American war: and though with them the eternal difference between trained and untrained; between regular and irregular; (what are called irregular being with them perfectly regular troops in their own kind) between veteran and disciplined soldiers and hasty levies, is perfectly understood; yet the mode of warfare introduced by them countenances much more than heretofore, the utility of such armed and partially instructed bodies, as that which I have presumed to recommend.

The measure is, at least, good as far as it goes. It draws no man from his home; it

puts no man in a state of painful constraint; it stops no man in his business, so as to leave his family to distress or become a charge upon the public. It has the further merit of not interfering with any thing else, so as to prevent any man from entering the army, or navy, or militia, or serving the state in any other way.

Expense I would have none. The pay of the officer, the price of the powder consumed, the hire of the store-house for depositing the arms in cases where the parish church could not be made to serve the purpose, with such an allowance to the men, as was a mere equivalent for their lost time, these would be the whole, or nearly the whole, of the expenses incident to the plan, which certainly could not be thought objectionable on that score.

So much as to its negative merits. As to its advantages, it provides for a distribution of arms whenever the time shall come; and it prepares the people in a certain degree for the use of them. It fills the country with powder and ball: and it instructs those in whose custody they are placed, to what hands, when the emergency shall call for it, they may be entrusted to the greatest advantage and with most safety. The officer, aided by the leading gentlemen, by the clergyman, by the principal yeomen and others, and having continued intercourse with the lower orders, will soon be able to form a tolerable judgment of those on whom he may rely, upon such an occasion, and those, who from feebleness or otherwise are less worthy of such confidence. But the greatest, possibly, of all the advantages which I should be inclined to hope from this plan is, that most important of all preparations, the preparation of the mind. It seems to be almost the only way, (I must think the most effectual) in which they will be thoroughly impressed with a conviction of the danger. The present measure will, I confess, prove a powerful instructor as far as inconvenience goes: but, that is, at least, not the pleasantest way of conveying instruction. But the present measure will never instruct the people in this, that it must be on their own exertions, that they must depend for salvation. One main objection to the measure is, that its tendency is the direct reverse. In the other way, both a sense of the danger, and a knowledge of the means necessary to be employed against it, will be carried into every farm-house and every cottage. It will be the conversation of the village green, of the church porch, and what is not the least, perhaps, of the ale-house. Men will be turning their thoughts to what they can do upon the occasion, will be calling up the memory of former exploits, will be counting upon their newly acquired means and knowledge, and above all will be familiarizing their minds to the object. It is not to be told how much of military knowledge (which is nothing more than the application of common sense to situations, new indeed, but soon capable of being comprehended,) will spring up under this cultivation, in situations, where apparently it was to be least expected. An officer stationed in this way, if only by promoting military conversation, will become a source of instruction by no means to be despised. Every day of exercise or walk into the fields will be a sort of clinical lecture. If the officer be an intelligent man, and has seen service, he will soon find himself surrounded by people, who will have acquired under his instructions reasonably good military ideas, and have qualified themselves, should the occasion arise, to render him very useful assistance.

This sort of armed force, not confined, like the volunteers hitherto raised, to small troops in towns, and who (without disparagement be it spoken,) consist for the most part of persons, who from bodily force, habits, and situation of life, cannot generally be expected to support the fatigues of military service.—This sort of armed force, coextensive with the active population of the country, though it cannot of itself stop the march of an army, must produce an immense effect, aided by troops of yeomanry, whose utility will be very great, in co-operation with such resistance as we expect from forces of a different description. When we talk of the difference to armies acting in a friendly or a hostile country, we certainly do not suppose that difference to be less, because the hostile country happens to be prepared and armed.

But every preparation of this sort has hitherto, by his Majesty's ministers, been completely neglected. We are, for aught we know, within two months of invasion, and the measure now just brought forth, is the only measure except the calling out the Militia, which they appear to have thought of. But they do, it seems, immense things in secret. True dignity shows itself in calm! Why, Sir, what these measures can be, of which the country knows nothing, it is not very easy to comprehend; and therefore one a little distrusts the nature of this calm. There are different sorts of calm. There is the calm of confident and complacent hope, and the calm of despair. The calm of men, who having passed the first agitation of danger, have settled their minds to a determined

resistance to it; and the calm of those, who are only tranquil, because, from ignorance or insensibility, they are wholly incredulous of its approach. I wish the Hon. Gentlemen's calm may not be that of a wretched lodger, who, hearing a noise below, instead of manfully getting up to resist the robbers, only hides his head in the bed clothes, and hopes they may go off with their other booty without coming into his apartment.

Their secrecy too is altogether as whimsical an idea. They observe, I suppose, that Buonaparté is very secret; and judging him, as they well may, to be a great Captain, they conceive, by imitating his secrecy, that they shall appear to be great Captains themselves. But they forget the difference between attack and defence. A man who means to surprise his enemy does very right to keep his intentions secret; but it is not altogether so proper on the part of him who means only not to be surprised. An officer who was about to surprise a post, by a night attack suppose, would do very well not to tell his soldiers, whither he was leading them; but it would be odd, if the officer on the other side was to say to the next in command, 'I have intelligence that we shall be attacked to night; but remember this is only for yourself. Don't say a word to the guard; secrecy is the very soul of military operations.'—There is another rather material difference, that Buonaparté has nothing to do but to issue his orders with a certainty that they will be punctually obeyed, whether the army like them or not, whether they are called upon to execute them at a longer or shorter notice, or whether they have any conception or not of the general purpose which they are meant to answer.—But the army, here to be applied to, is the people of Great Britain, who, besides that, they may debate a little upon the orders which they receive, must act in a great degree from their own impulse and discretion, and who will never be brought to act at all, if they themselves are not previously made sensible of the danger.—I, for one, will not pay them so bad a compliment as to suppose that they are not fit to be trusted with this secret. I disclaim the notion, I renounce 'as impious and heretical' that 'damnable doctrine,' that to blind the people as to their true situation, to conceal from them the reality of the danger, is the only way to keep up their courage. If this is really their state, then is the country in a deplorable way indeed: but changed as the people of this country are, by a thousand causes, and under the influence of a sort of language, and policy which has prevailed for so many years, I will never believe, that they must be lulled into a false security, be exposed to all the dreadful dangers of a surprise, (the effects of which no man can calculate,) because, to show their danger would be to dismay them. How do we combine this with all the vaunting and high-flown compliments, which we are for ever paying them? Are they only brave, when they believe there is no danger? I reject the imputation. Their safety depends upon their exertions; and their exertions must be stimulated, as I am confident they will be stimulated, by a sense of their danger.

In addition to those exertions which the people themselves must make, and on which must rest our chief hopes, there is much that ministers themselves ought to be diligently employed about, but to which I much suspect no attention has been given. Every officer of note and character in the country ought to be called upon for his opinion: not an opinion given in conversation, and with an obliging acquiesence, perhaps, to the presumed notions or wishes of the person he is talking to, but such as must stand in evidence against him, and on which his military judgment and credit will be at stake. Innumerable measures of precaution are likewise necessary, and which would not be the less useful, because they would be attended with no expense or distress to the country. I do not object to the present measure on account of the expense or inconvenience which attend it, great as they will be. Whatever is necessary must be done, let the hardship be what it will. But I beg that we may not invert the proposition, as many are apt to do, and suppose that whatever is burthensome and oppressive, must therefore be efficacious. I suspect the present measure to be of that character: possibly in all its parts; but unquestionably I must object to it, in that part, which goes in the first instance, and finally, as I believe, to make it impossible for us to have an army.

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## NAVAL.

FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE.

*June* 13.—Lieut. Archbold, in the *Eling* off Cape Frehel, captured *L'Espiegle* privateer, manned with 12 men and armed with small arms, 18 days from St. Maloes.

*June* 14.—Capt. Owen, in the *Immortalité*, in company with the *Jaloux* and *Cruizer* sloops, chased *L'Inabordable*, schooner, and *Le Commode* brig; each carrying 3 24-pounders and 1 8-pounder, on shore on the east part of Cape Blanc Nez, and after a heavy firing from them and the batteries, took possession of them.

## FOREIGN.

*Leghorn, June 1.*—This city is declared in a state of siege by *Gen. Murat*, and all the English made prisoners of war.

*Hanover, June 7.*—The greatest quiet prevails in this city in consequence of the good treatment the inhabitants have received from the French army. The Elbe and the Weser continue open to neutral vessels, and are only shut against the British.

## SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

HANOVER.—The Moniteur of the 17th instant contains an article, in the shape of a note on the English news, stating, that the council, to assist at which his Majesty came from Windsor on the 11th instant, was held on the subject of the convention between Gen. Mortier and the Hanoverian Regency. "An extraordinary courier," says the Moniteur, "carried this instrument for the sig-"nature of the King of England, the First "Consul insisting upon that, previous to "ratifying it himself."—And this is proclaimed all over the world! This cup of humiliation (God send it may be the last!) this act by which his Majesty is compelled to sanction, under his own hand and seal, the most disgraceful capitulation that ever was consented to by any army or any government upon earth, he owes entirely to the "*safe* politicians," who made, and who defended the peace of Amiens.—The Moniteur has an article dated Hanover, 7th instant, which abounds in abuse, or, at least, in sarcasm, on his Majesty's sons. It is hardly credible, that this can have been the language of the Hanoverians; but, it must be confessed, that the shameful manner, in which their country was surrendered, would sanction a belief in any act of baseness on their part. It is true, indeed, that the Hanoverians were shamefully abandoned by the British ministers, who, it is positively asserted, despised all the advice that was offered them as to the Electorate, for the fate of which they said, even to the last moment, that they saw no cause of uneasiness! God send, that their administration may cost their Master no other part of his dominions! Let us hope, that the Addingtons will not be so careless about Richmond Park as they have been about Hanover! Their "*family*" is not quite so ancient as that of Brunswick, which after that of Bourbon is the most ancient in Europe. France was lost through the imbecillity and selfishness of its ministers much more than through any other means; Hanover has been lost from a similar cause; and, while that cause exists in England, what man that loves his country can be free from apprehension?—At the time when the partition of Germany was going on, the English ministry seemed to rejoice at it. They said, in their hired prints, that it would prevent the return of war upon the Continent; and, we find, that, amongst all their lately conjured-up complaints, this does not make its appearance. They were, however, told, that Hanover, in case of another war, would instantly be seized on by the French: all that has now arrived was foreseen and foretold: they turned a deaf ear to it: they retained their places: who, therefore, but their dupes are astonished at the event? And who is there weak enough to pity those dupes?

FRENCH REMARKS ON THE BUDGET.—The Moniteur has also some remarks on Mr. Addington's budget, which may not be altogether uninteresting to that worthy person and his supporters.—On the passage where the wise minister speaks of the necessity of preparing for an arduous and even a protracted war, the Moniteur says, "If "his Britannic Majesty really intends to "accomplish the object of the war; that is "to say, 1. to keep Malta; 2. to make "France submit to the new public law in-"vented by England; 3. to make sure that "all the countries which the timid Mr. Ad-"dington shall think necessary to provide "for the safety of Great Britain, shall be "instantly given up to her, the war will be "much longer than this honourable man "thinks, with all his fore-sight."—One of the principal objects of the war, as stated by the wise man, in his budget-speech, and as repeated by both him and the Secretary at War, in the debate of the 20th instant, is to convince Buonaparté, or, to use the phrase of those prudent ministers, *the person at the head of the government of France*; to convince this person, that "it is hopeless "for him to contend with our finances, and "that it is not in his power to affect us in "that respect (1)."—To which Buonaparté laconically replies: "*Pay your Bank Notes* "*in gold and silver*, and then I'll believe "you, without your going to war."—If this saucy sarcastic fellow were here, Mr. Addington and Abraham Newland would tell him another story. If he were to present them a bank note of a hundred pounds, they would not, indeed, give him a hundred pounds in cash for it; but they would give him a hundred little notes; and, in order to convince him of their *ability* to pay in gold, were they not *restrained* by act of Parliament, they would show him (*through a glass case*) a great number of wedges of that precious metal, which wedges are kept with

(1) See Speech, Register, Vol. III. p. 912.

as much care as the guinea in the pocket of the Vicar of Wakefield's daughter.—The truth, is, that to state motives such as that held out by the minister, on the occasion alluded to, is consummately ridiculous. It may be proper to take measures to convince your enemy, that he cannot injure your finances; but publicly to hold out this as the object of your measures, must of necessity defeat that object. No; the true way of convincing your enemy, that his war upon your finances will be useless, is to state explicitly to the world, that you are not at all afraid of the consequences of what is called a national bankruptcy; for, while you endeavour to make people believe, that such an event *cannot possibly happen*, they will certainly think that you regard it, if it should happen, as *irretrievable ruin and destruction*; and, therefore, as you never can quite overcome their apprehensions, the best way is to be silent upon the subject, or to set the terrific bug-bear at defiance.—To Buonaparté's exultation at our approaching bankruptcy the answer is always ready: France has been a bankrupt; France has not paid her paper money in specie; yet France is not the weaker for that; France is in spite of her ruined finances, in spite of the long pamphlets of Sir Francis D'Ivernois and Mr. Rose, in spite of the longer speeches of Lord Mornington, Lord Auckland, and Mr. Pitt, in spite of the innumerable columns of figures which these noblemen and gentlemen have drawn up in battle array against her; in spite of all this, France is yet powerful, yea, much more powerful than she was before she experienced what is called a national bankruptcy. What ground, therefore, have the French to rejoice at our finances being about to undergo a similar operation?——Mr. Addington threw out a hint of his intention to subsidise some of the powers of the Continent: "It" (meaning his plan of finance) "will have a "still further effect, that of convincing the "other powers of Europe, that they may "safely join with us in the common cause "against the common enemy, for that the "resources of this country are such as to "give full security for the punctual dis-"charge of any engagement it may enter "into (2)."—To this the Consul, after enumerating some particular instances, replies: "Your faith is known. 'Till the generation, which now covers the Continent, "has totally disappeared, *not one of its "princes will ever make a common cause with "you.*"—If this remark be confined to the *present ministry*, there is every reason to believe, that it is perfectly correct; for, after the treatment of the Stadtholder, the King of Sardinia, and the Vendean Royalists, what prince, what people, or what party, will ever again repose confidence in the good faith of the "*safe* politicians" of England? This is one great reason why these men should be put out of their places. We want allies, and it is absolutely impossible that we should ever have them while the power of the state is committed to the hands of such people. Can any man believe, that the French Royalists will ever again hazard their lives for the men who offered to *banish* them out of Europe, merely to appease, to humour, Buonaparté, the very person against whom they had been fighting? No; every shilling that is put into the hands of such ministers, every soldier, every sailor, that is placed under their command, is an injury to the country instead of a good: it is robbing the country of those means, which, in other hands, might be employed for its salvation ——The sapient minister, in stating the grounds, on which he and his colleagues asked for supplies, said: "We ask assist-"ance, *not because we wish to go to war*, but "because *we are at war*, and we are at "war, *because we cannot be at peace* (3)."—This is, says the Moniteur, "a strange "manner of reasoning. All the world "knows, that the English ministers began "the war: they began it *because they could "not* (for reasons best known to themselves) "*be at peace*; and they continue it, *because "it is begun!* To what men is the fate of "nations sometimes committed!"

FRENCH ANSWERS TO THE ENGLISH DECLARATION.—The reader will, doubtless recollect, that there was laid before Parliament, on the 18th of last month, a paper, having the word DECLARATION at the head of it, in very large letters, but without a date, or any other signature than that of "EYRE *and* STRAHAN, *Printers to "the King's Most Excellent Majesty*;" so that, if this paper should be in existence some years hence, it may possibly lead persons to suppose, that these two gentlemen followed, at one and the same time, the calling of printers and that of ministers of state, a supposition which will be rendered the more probable by the appearance of Mr. STRAHAN's name in the list of the Members of Parliament. This Declaration is, however, regarded as a declaration of war issued by his Majesty, the King of Great Britain, against France; and, as such, it has been answered in the Moniteur, first in an unofficial set of observations, and, since, in a

(2) See Register, Vol. III. p. 912.

(3) See Register, Vol. III. p. 914.

more full, formal, and official way, by some person acting under the immediate direction of the government. These two performances are executed with great ability, and, it must be confessed, with more candour than one had reason to expect. Every art is, indeed, made use of, in order to effect a refutation of the statements in the English Declaration; quibbling and sophistry are, too, occasionally called in to the aid of a bad argument, and, a considerable liberty is, as far as relates to the general conduct and disposition of France, taken with facts; but, upon the whole, the English ministry have no reason to complain of the course pursued by these writers, who have, at any rate, discovered much greater fairness than themselves.—The reason, however, for our mentioning these writings now, is, not so much to excite an inquiry into their nature and their intrinsic merits, as to stimulate the ministers to make *a public and professed reply to them.* Let it be recollected, that the Moniteur circulates in all the courts, and amongst all the politicians, of Europe. It is next to impossible, that he who reads these answers to the English Declaration, should not, until he sees them refuted, regard the declaration as replete with misreprentation and falsehood. That such publications call loudly for reply cannot be doubted, especially when it is considered, that their principal object and their direct tendency is, to render any future good understanding between England and the powers of the Continent utterly impossible. —Let not the ministers allege, that they are not bound to reply to the writers of newspapers. An article in the Hamburgh Correspondenten and another in the Moniteur, are, in the King's declaration, stated to be amongst the principal grievances that led to the war. Thus authenticated, thus clad with solemnity, it surely will not now be pretended, that the Moniteur is beneath the notice of an English ministry; and, therefore, we shall expect to see an attempt, at least, on the part of that ministry, to do away the charges which are thus circulating over the world to the injury and dishonour of their country and their Sovereign. But, should we be disappointed in this expectation; should they continue to show that contempt for the interests of their country and for the reputation of their Master which has hitherto been the leading characteristic of their actions, we shall think it our duty to lay before our readers the substance of the French publications, abovementioned, in order that they may be fully informed of the heavy charges, which the enemy has preferred, and which the ministers are suffering to circulate through the world, not only unrefuted, but totally undenied.

INCOME-TAX.—We have yet heard nothing to reconcile our minds to this impost. The mode of collection is odious and detestable, and leaves a man very little of what is truly called freedom. The "*precedent*" on which Mr. Addington said it was founded, was, we believe, by no means fortunate. In the reign of that sacrilegious and inexorable tyrant, Henry VIII, a tax of this sort was imposed by Cardinal Woolsey. The Londoners made a strong opposition to it, and the country absolutely rose against it, and caused it to be disowned by the king, who issued a general pardon to the revolters. Such a precedent, from such times, brought into practice now, clearly shows, that the spirit of the country, that all love of real freedom, is lost. Indeed, while a minister is reviving this hateful tax, it is an unbearable insult to the people to call on them to fight for their *constitution*, which, if it be not a mere nose of wax, if all the world has not been deceived as to its principles, must, in fact, cease to exist the moment the measure in contemplation is carried into effect. In answer to this we shall be told, that the present tax is in imitation of Mr. Pitt; and, had we subscribed to the infallibility of that gentleman, this might be a consideration of some weight; but we recollect parliamentary reform, the abolition of the slave trade, the abolition of tythes, the peace of Amiens, the mediation of Russia, and several other projects, and this recollection is by no means calculated to make us in love with an odious and despotic measure, merely because it originated with Mr. Pitt.—We object to the tax, not because it is oppressive in its quantity, but because it is, in its collection, vexatious and degrading to the last degree. Ten times the amount of this tax, levied on visible objects, would not, in our estimation, be a thousandth part so great a hardship as to be compelled to submit one's most private concerns to the inquest of a set of little upstart despots, called commercial commissioners.

DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY.—The project for raising an army of conscripts is now sufficiently understood, and, we believe, almost universally reprobated. A force is wanted; an additional force of 50,000 men is by no means too great, even for the mere purposes of defence; but, it is a *real force*, and not the name, the shadow of a force, that is wanted; it is an *army of soldiers*, and not an *armed mob*, that we shall stand in need of to repel an invading French

army.—Referring the reader to Mr. Windham's speech for information as to the mischievous effects which this system of conscription must have, as to the regular service as well as to the feelings and dispositions of the people, we shall confine our remarks to the mere organization of this heterogenous body, which the Secretary of War chooses to call the *Army of Reserve!* And, here, laying aside the editorial manner of speaking, let me ask this gentleman whether he really does believe, that, upon his plan, 50,000 men, will ever be raised and rendered fit for service. There are to be 50 battalions, each of 1,000 men, requiring, in the whole, 3,000 commissioned officers, 6,000 non-commissioned officers, and about 700 drummers. And, Sir, do you seriously believe, that these are to be found, now out of actual service in the United Kingdoms of Great-Britain and Ireland? Do you think, Sir, that 3,000 officers are to be got, and officers too fit to assist in that most difficult of all difficult matters, the organizing and training new corps? These officers are to come first from the Army Half Pay List, that is to say, from that list upon which officers have, very lately, been placed as a punishment for having encouraged their soldiers to thieve! No doubt there are many excellent officers upon this list; but is it a source to which the nation can look with great confidence? Next we are, it seems, to have recourse to officers who have *left* the army for *want of promotion*, just as a physician leaves his practice for want of patients, or, as the Addingtons, for instance, left the bar for want of clients. Many of these gentlemen, will, it seems, now "come forward in the service of their coun-"try!" After these come the marine officers on half pay, to whom there is, perhaps, no other objection than that they will most assuredly not be very proud of being huddled into the same corps with those already mentioned, and also with the officers to be picked up upon the shelf of the Company of Merchants trading to the East-Indies. When all these sources are exhausted, we are, as a pis-aller, to go to the officers of the late yeomanry corps in Ireland! And these, *these* are the men, who are not only to command, but who are to *pay*, clothe, feed, and train, this army of 50,000 men, composed of all classes of the community! These are the men, who are to exercise power, necessarily almost absolute, over respectable artizans, tradesmen, and farmers!—But, supposing for argument's sake, that there should be a bare possibility of finding a sufficiency of officers, against whom the conscripts would not mutiny before the end of the first fortnight, where are the non-commissioned officers to come from? There cannot be, to each battalion, less than 40 serjeants and 80 corporals, which, after deducting for staff and other extra duties, will not leave more than one non-commissioned officer to every 10 men, a proportion not great enough even in an old and well-disciplined corps, and much too small in a corps composed of raw, unruly, and, it is to be feared, discontented men. You *must* know, Sir, that, without this number of non-commissioned officers, I mean good, and, in some degree, experienced ones, the battalions cannot be, I will not say formed, drilled, disciplined, and rendered fit for service, but that, without the aid I am now speaking of, the men cannot be *kept together*, either on the march, or in camp, or cantonments, and hardly under the lock and key of a barrack. You will, I suppose, readily dispense with what is called *high discipline*; but the persons composing the "army of reserve," the army which is to be our last rock of defence, this dernier resort of a people, who, previous to the accursed treaty of Amiens, set the world at defiance; you certainly will not deny, Sir, that the persons composing this army, should be taught to stand in a straight row, to range themselves in rank and file, and to fire three deep without shooting one another in the poll? And, even this trifle, together with the art of marching, a battalion together, without treading each other under foot; even this, which will place them but one degree above an armed rabble, even this cannot be effected without the number, which I have already mentioned, of *experienced* non-commissioned officers. And where are these 6,000 non-commissioned officers to come from? The regular regiments? No: you never can intend to rob these skeletons of their very bones; unless, indeed, a part of this splendid project is to break up the army altogether. Besides, the regular army does not possess this number, nor a third part of this number of men, fit to be non-commissioned officers, exclusive of those who are already acting in that capacity, and who are greatly wanted in the recruiting and disciplining of their own corps. Two thousand, at least, of the non-commissioned officers, wanted for your army of reserve, must be able to read and write; they must be intelligent men, and must be worthy of being trusted with considerable sums of money. Where, then, Sir; pray where, Sir, are these men to be found? Amongst the conscripts themselves? "If "the blind lead the blind, both shall fall "into the ditch." How can one of these

men, who hardly knows the butt from the muzzle of the musket, instruct another of them in the use of his arms? How is one single company to be formed? How can any one act be done preparatory even to the bringing of any ten men of this army upon parade? When the militia is called out, the soldiers find the skeleton ready to receive them: their adjutant, their *serjeants* and drummers are always in pay, and always ready to set instantly at work to train and discipline the men, as fast as they arrive; but, in the present instance, though you should find officers enough including adjutants, where are you to find 6 000 non-commisioned officers, including 100 serjeants major and the same number of quarter-master serjeants? The thing is impossible; not to *appoint* non-commissioned officers; not to call this footman a corporal and that tapster a serjeant; this is by no means difficult; but to find men qualified to perform the duties of these officers, duties absolutely indispensable, duties without the performance of which a corps cannot be *held together* for a single day, to find such men, in the number and in the time, necessary to carry your plan into effect, is utterly impossible.—Shall I be reminded of the atchievements of the *new levies* in France and America? These were, in the debate of the 6th instant, brought forward by you, in opposition to the opinion then given by Mr. Windham. Upon this subject, sir (as I cannot impute to you a wilful fallacy), I must regard you as totally ignorant. The new levies in France, those I mean who were opposed to the Duke of Brunswick's army, were very few indeed in proportion to the regular troops engaged in the same service; and, observe, that, by the regulations of the national guard, *the whole of the French people* capable of bearing arms, had been armed, and partly disciplined, for I believe more than *three years*, previous to the invasion of the Prussian army. During these years, the people, at all times of a military turn, had been gradually growing into soldiers. Every municipality had its mayor, who was at the head of the national guard, who supplied his men with arms and ammunition, and who generally went to see them parade, to march, and to shoot at a mark, which was the employment of the sundays and holidays. The people found themselves military cloths, not under any volunteer or yeomanry regulation, not by any sort of compulsion; but every one bought himself a coat as he wanted and could afford a new coat, and, it soon became to be regarded as a mark of dishonour in a young man not to be clothed à la militaire. There was not a village, there was no spot of importance enough to have a church, which had not its place of arms and its *drummer*, a personage by no means of little consideration when the object is to stir the spirits of a people and to give to those spirits a war-like direction.—Thus, Sir, was the whole active population of France became soldiers, long before the Duke of Brunswick entered the country; and, as to later epochs, the taste and spirit have been growing every day, more and more military: the young men of 1803, were only from 4 to 10 years old, when the national guard began; they have been raised up from their infancy amidst the clangour of arms, and have never heard any thing but military deeds stated as being worthy of emulation. They are, in a word, all real effective soldiers. *This*, Sir, is the nursery, from which Buonaparté draws his conscripts: how different is that from which yours are to be drawn! —— Then, Sir, as to the American army, the men composing it were, as you state, beaten at first, but that they finally triumphed. First, let me observe, that the *militia* of America, though, as I shall presently show, composed of men used to arms, never met the enemy except at the battle which terminated in the defeat of Burgoyne. On no other occasion could they be brought to the striking place; and, in several instances, they absolutely ran away. After the end of the American war, General Sinclair, in a battle against the Indians, was totally defeated, through the misbehaviour of the militia, of whom his army principally consisted, and who ran away, leaving not only their arms and their knapsacks, but even their *coats*, behind them!—But, the American army, you will say, "must have "been made up of raw and undisciplined "men, whether they were called militia or "not." It was; but the men were, as to their state of preparation for military service, very different, very much superior to those whom you will be able to collect by conscription. In London, it is said of a good man, that is to say, of a rich man, that he was "born with a silver spoon in his mouth," no unapt emblem, by the by, of the strange mixture of childishness, gluttony, and avarice, which prevails in that emporium of commerce; in America, they say of an active, sprightly, lucky man, that he was "born with an ax in one hand and a gun "in the other;" and, every one who has been in America knows, that, in the whole country, there is scarcely a man to be found, who has not, from the age of twelve years, or thereabouts, been in the almost daily habit of shooting. I never saw a farm house, I never saw even a labouring man's house,

without a gun in it, and I have much more frequently seen three guns in a house than one. Part of every countryman's *business* is to shoot. During the winter months the labouring man does, in great part, maintain his family by shooting; and, in fact, it is extremely rare to meet with an American, either in town or country, who would not, in England, be regarded as an excellent shooter at a mark.—To find men thus self-trained to a very essential part of military duty was a great advantage; and, then, Sir, I beg you to observe, that even these men were not taken by force, and enrolled, all at once, by thousands and tens of thousands. They were first called out, by mere invitation, to join in military exercise, in their several townships, or parishes, under the instruction of those officers and soldiers who had served in the war against the French; and, the very first out-set of GENERAL WASHINGTON, in the work of rebellion, was, a subscription of twenty guineas towards furnishing a drum and a drill serjeant to the inhabitants of his own parish in Virginia. When, therefore, the requisitions for the line (for the American army was composed of troops of the line) came to be made by Congress, to the several colonies, they found men already tolerably well prepared. They found them in as good a state, Sir, as your conscripts can possibly be in, at the end of a year or eighteen months drilling, even supposing that you should be so fortunate as to find persons capable of drilling them.——Leaving you now, Sir, to reconsider whatever part of your confidence has arisen from the examples of France and America, give me leave to advert to the new clause, which, it seems, it is your intention to weave into the Conscript Bill, and, in virtue of which the Conscripts are to be allowed *to volunteer for the regular service*. The gloomy prospect, which this qualification must give to the gentlemen, who will have the misfortune to command the Conscripts, Mr. Pitt attempted to brighten by suggesting a regulation that would prevent the men from leaving their officers at any moment they might choose. His plan was, to suffer the transfer to take place, only on three or four days in the year, and those days *not to be the same in every year*, not to be at *stated distances*, but to come upon the men like a thief in the night, to take them by surprize, and never to give them any certain intimation as to the precise time when they would be able to take vengeance on their officers. These days of transfer are not, in their recurrence, to resemble either fixed or moveable feasts; they are to be regulated by neither the Sun nor the Moon; but are to be a sort of Saturnalia, the times for celebrating which are to be determined by a newly-discovered species of State Lottery. But, did it not occur to Mr. Pitt, that, as the Conscript would know that four Saturnalia *must* take place in the course of one year, he would not fail, at all times, to calculate the average? Upon this average, he never could be more than three months from the day of revenge, and, do you, Sir, who know something of a military life, think, that those three months would, on the part of the discontented Conscript, be spent much to the advantage of his corps? —Never, no never, was there so mad a scheme! The battalions, if they should ever be got together at all, and should exist for a time under a provision like this, will present a scene, such, I venture to predict, as no man on earth ever yet set his eyes on.—No, if the Conscripts are to have leave to transfer their service, let them be under no shackles as to the time of doing it. Let them go whenever they please, or not at all; for, by keeping them three months after they are inclined to go into the line, you either make them unwilling and bad soldiers during that time, or you altogether do away the very inclination, of which it is your object to avail yourself.——And now, Sir, give me leave to say a word or two on the *dangers* of our situation. *You*, Sir, are not one of those, who hide their heads under the bed-cloths when they hear thieves breaking into the house; *you* do, indeed, talk largely, but your heart is in unison with your tongue; *you* are not one of those whose hectoring arises from a feeling similar to that which produces the noisy and incoherent song of the plough-boy, as he passes through the church yard at the witching time of night; *you* are not a Castlereagh, a Hawkesbury, an Addington, or a Wilberforce, and, therefore, I venture to state to you, as an opinion, resulting from long consideration united with the utmost anxiety for the preservation of my King and Country, that *if the present system of defence be persevered in*, this country will be subjugated by France. This, Sir, is no new opinion of mine: so long ago as the 9th of November last (6), when you and your colleagues were singing hymns of *peace* and *security*, I pointed out, and even detailed, the dangers, which at this moment exist. The words I then wrote I have only to refer you to, and when you have read them, I do not think, that, in the bottom of your heart, you will despise the observations

(6) See Register, Vol. II. p. 598.

which I have now presumed to make. The crisis is come: the siege of our island is begun; and, it now behoves us, to think, not only of the means of preventing a breach, but of the manner in which we shall act, *if a breach should be made*, whether we shall hazard all in a single battle between the sea-coast and London, or whether, leaving the gold and silver to the invaders, we shall still make a struggle for our liberties, and for the Crown of our Sovereign. Mr. Windham, for only alluding to this alternative, and that too, by way of comment on an opinion, relative to it, already stated elsewhere, has been charged with "*disheartening the country*," with "*creating* "*despondency*," with "*spreading alarm* "*amongst the people*;" and, which is not a little curious, this accusation is brought against him, at the very same moment that he is accused of *quixotism!* And is it, then, something so very dreadful to contemplate this alternative? Must we necessarily despond, because we regard the sacking of London as a *possible* event? Can we not look at this object, even in imagination, without expiring in a fit of despair? Lord Castlereagh tells the people, that "nothing "but baseness and cowardice in them *will* "*suffer the enemy to advance far from* "*the shore*." This is not correct, Sir. The enemy may advance far, very far from the shore without any baseness or cowardice on the part of the people. *I wish*, and I *hope*, that the enemy may not so advance, and the same wishes and hopes were expressly and clearly stated by Mr. Windham; but, if the enemy *should* advance into the country; if this dangerous case *should* arise, who do you think, Sir, would be the statesman most likely to save the country; he who would have no resource but bitter, unjust, and unavailing reproaches on the people; or he, who, even at the expense of the capital, would call on them and encourage them to defend the king and the kingdom?——But, Sir, whatever may be your opinion on this subject, how long soever the system of misrepresentation, with respect to Mr. Windham's opinions, may be persevered in, and however complete the success of that system, *events* will not thereby be controuled in their operation: they speak in a language that *must* be heard. I beg you to remark, Sir, how you and your colleagues have gone on in adopting successively, all those sentiments of Mr. Windham, which, at the time of his first uttering them, you have uniformly rejected with disdain. When, with that solemnity which became the occasion, and the forebodings with which his mind was oppressed, he described the treaty of peace as the death-warrant of the country; when he refused to put on his wedding garment, 'till he knew whether he was invited to a marriage or a funeral; in a short space after that memorable day, the ministerial news-papers recorded a witticism of Lord Hawkesbury, who, they informed the public, had facetiously said: "Come, Wind-"ham, do put on your wedding garment, "and go along with us to carry up the "address." In this manner, Sir, have all his sentiments been treated at first, but they have always been afterwards adopted, and always when *too late;* and this course, I greatly fear, will be obstinately pursued, 'till the monarchy of England follows the monarchy of France.—It has been said, Sir, particularly by you, that the treaty of Amiens has produced the salutary effect of uniting the people in a hearty and zealous *support of the present war*.—Where is the proof of this? In the *two* addresses delivered to His Majesty, from the cities of London and Dublin? Is it to be found in the *facility* with which the militia has been collected? Or in the law, now passing, for the purpose of *forcing* men to take up arms in *defence* of their own houses?—But, Sir, if you believe that the people will cheerfully pay the enormous taxes which the peace of Amiens has rendered absolutely necessary, and that they have entered on the war with a resolution to shed their last drop of blood rather than suffer the house and land in Richmond Park to be taken from Mr. Addington; if you do really believe this, you have adopted a great and most dangerous error, an error from which, if you repose in it but for a little while, you will be awakened by a voice, which will yield in terror to nothing but the last awful trump.—The truth is, Sir, that a general and deadly *indifference* pervades the land. The people still see the powers of the state in the hands of those, who for ten months peace, gave up the conquests won during ten years of war and of victory. The people cannot, the people will not, chearfully espouse any cause conducted by those men. While their property and their lives are at the mercy of persons by whom they have been so injured and disgraced, they must and they will regard themselves as the sport of party intrigue, and, so regarding themselves, they will be indifferent as to any and every political event.

☞ *All* Correspondents next week.

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